



County of Sonoma  
Permit & Resource Management Department

## Sonoma County Design Review Committee STAFF REPORT

**FILE:** DRH19-0014; Los Pinos Apartments  
**DATE:** June 17, 2020  
**TIME:** At or after 1:30 pm  
**STAFF:** Katrina Braehmer, Project Planner

### **SUMMARY**

<b>Property Owner:</b>	Alex Diaz-Santana
<b>Applicant:</b>	Alex Diaz-Santana
<b>Address:</b>	3496 Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa
<b>Supervisory District(s):</b>	Third
<b>APN:</b>	134-132-015
<b>Description:</b>	Request for Design Review of a 50-unit multifamily housing project (12 one-bedroom units, 38 two-bedroom units) located on a 2.49 acre parcel to be served by public sewer and water.
<b>CEQA Review:</b>	Mitigated Negative Declaration (in process)
<b>General Plan Land Use:</b>	UR 13
<b>Ordinance Reference:</b>	Article 24 – R3 High Density Residential District Article 82 – Design Review Article 89 – Affordable Housing Program Requirements and Incentives
<b>Zoning:</b>	R3 B6 13 DU, RC100/25 VOH



## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Permit Resource and Management Department (Permit Sonoma) recommends that the Design Review Committee consider the project's preliminary design plans and provide feedback to the applicant regarding the site plan, building architecture, building materials and colors, lighting and landscaping.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Alex Diaz-Santana requests Design Review of a 50-unit multifamily housing project (12 one-bedroom units, 38 two-bedroom units) located on a 2.49 acre parcel to be served by public sewer and water. Development will consist of seven two-story buildings, a community room, a children's play area, community garden, 113 parking spaces (50 covered), and 24 bicycle parking spaces. The applicant requests a 20% density bonus, electing to reserve two units for very low income households.

No public comment has been received to date. One member of the public emailed on 1/4/2020 to inquire whether the project included an affordability component.

The proposal is consistent with the General Plan, South Santa Rosa Area Plan, and Zoning Code. The project is undergoing environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A Mitigated Negative Declaration will be prepared and available for review by the Committee members at a future hearing.

## **PROJECT SITE AND CONTEXT**

### ***Background***

The 2.49 acre parcel is zoned R3 (High Density Residential) B6 13 DU (13 units/acre density), RC100/25 (Riparian Corridor 100-foot/25-foot setback) VOH (Valley Oak Habitat Combining District). The project site is within the purview of the South Santa Rosa Area Plan. The parcel's General Plan land use designation is Urban Residential (13 units/acre density). The site is within the sphere of influence of the City of Santa Rosa, the City's Urban Growth Boundary, the City's General Plan boundary, and the county's Urban Service Area.

To protect the integrity of the City's General Plan under the assumption of future annexation, the project must be consistent with the City's General Plan, built to City development standards, and approved by the joint City/County Design Review Committee. The project site is designated Medium Density Residential (8-18 units/acre density) in the City's General Plan. The City requires development to be at least at the mid-point of the density range; therefore, the project must provide at least 13 units per acre to receive a Utility Certificate for water service. The project appears to be in conformance with the City of Santa Rosa's General Plan and development standards, and a Utility Certificate for water service will be issued by the City subject to the project design approval by the City/County Design Review Committee.

### **Site Characteristics**

The parcel is rectangular in shape, generally level at an elevation of 103-104 feet, and was previously developed with an abandoned single-family residence and several outbuildings, which were demolished and removed in preparation for the project. The majority of the front of the parcel has been disturbed and the site has a history of mowing. Surface water runoff flows south into a seasonal wetland swale located along the southern parcel boundary. A total of 0.30 acres of seasonal wetlands are present on the site, which will be permanently filled and require authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean



Water Act. Vegetation communities onsite primarily consist of non-native annual grasslands. There are a total of 12 trees onsite, including the following species: Coast Live Oak, Valley Oak, Oregon Oak, Cottonwood, and Acacia. Two Oregon Oaks and one Valley Oak are considered protected under the Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance. Mitigation for protected tree removal will be completed through onsite planting.

### ***Area Context and Surrounding Land Uses***

Table 1. Surrounding Land Use

Direction	Land Uses
North	General Industrial; Undeveloped
South	General Industrial; Mini-warehousing
East	Todd Creek, Sonoma Water Agency channel
West	Santa Rosa Avenue and General Commercial; Mini-warehousing

### ***Significant Applications Nearby***

The Redwood Apartments multifamily housing project is located just north of the project site at the corner of Santa Rosa Avenue and East Robles Avenue. The Redwood Apartments is a 96-unit, 100 percent affordable housing project, which was granted a 100 percent density bonus. The project was approved by the Design Review Committee in June 2019.

### ***Access***

Ingress and egress to the project will be from Santa Rosa Avenue through a 26-foot wide, double-loaded driveway. A turnaround towards the rear of the site provides access for emergency vehicles.

### ***Water/Wastewater/Utilities***

The City of Santa Rosa provides water service upon approval of a City Utility Certificate, and sewer service is provided by the South Park County Sanitation District.

### ***Other Environmental Conditions***

The project is within the regulatory Santa Rosa Plain and designated Critical Habitat for the California Tiger Salamander (CTS). The Programmatic Biological Opinion for the Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy lists the site as having “Potential for Presence of CTS and Listed Plants.”

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS**

The project is a 50-unit multifamily housing project including 12 one-bedroom units and 38 two-bedroom units, ranging from 750 to 1,150 square feet. Proposed residential amenities include a community room, a children's play area, and community garden. A total of 113 parking spaces (50 covered) and 24 bicycle parking spaces will be provided.

The base density of the project site is 32 units. The project's density is calculated using density unit equivalents as permitted in the R3 Zoning District, for a total of 35 unit equivalents. To allow for the three additional units beyond the base density of 32, the applicant requests a 20 percent density bonus and has elected to reserve two



units for very low income households (50 percent of area median income). Unit summary is outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Unit Summary

Unit Type	Unit Size	Number of Units	Density Unit Equivalent	Calculated Density
One-bedroom	750	12	0.50	6
Two-bedroom	900	12	0.75	9
Two-bedroom	1,000	24	0.75	18
Two-bedroom	1,150	2	1.00	2
Total	--	50	--	35

### ***Site Layout***

The proposed site layout depicts seven two-story buildings in a staggered alignment along the northern half of the parcel, and uncovered and carport parking along the southern half of the parcel. Buildings are separated by outdoor courtyards and each unit is provided an enclosed patio space. The building abutting Santa Rosa Avenue includes reception, a community room, and meeting and office space on the first floor, and two residential units on the second floor. The other six buildings comprise the rest of the residential units. A playground will be located near the courtyard between the first and second building. A community garden will be provided at the rear of the parcel.

### ***Architecture and Exterior Building Materials***

The architectural style could be considered contemporary. The project features simple, strong building shapes; low pitched gable and shed roofs; stucco-faced walls with vertical metal siding accent panels; and metal standing seam roof panels. The exterior material color palette employs neutral wall colors with earth tone colored metal and wooden accent features, and a gray roof.

### ***Site Lighting and Landscaping***

Site lighting includes downward facing wall sconces at building entrances, bollard pathway and parking lot lighting, and carport canopy downlights. A single monument sign on the north side of the driveway entrance will be illuminated with spotlights.

The primary landscaped areas will be along the perimeter of the project site, in parking lot islands, and along the patio areas of first floor units adjacent to the parking lot. Pine and cedar tree species will be planted along the front, northern, and eastern edges, along with other bushes and shrubs. Autumn Blaze Maple trees in parking lot islands will offer shade. Colorful and massed landscaping will be provided at courtyard and building entries. Landscaping will comply with the County's Water-Efficient Landscaping Ordinance.

### ***Signs and Fencing***

A six-foot solid wood perimeter fence is proposed. The project will include a monument sign on the north side of the driveway entrance.



## **Project History**

The table below summarizes key project milestones and events.

Table 3. Project History

Date	Project Event/Milestone
11/25/2019	Application
4/6/2020	Completeness
12/25/2019	Referral to prominent agencies

## **General Plan and Area Plans**

The following General Plan and Area Plan policies are applicable to the project:

### **GP LAND USE ELEMENT**

The overall purpose and definition of the Urban Residential Land Use category in the General Plan is to accommodate a variety of housing types with a full range of urban services.

Policy LU-16a: *Require full urban improvement standards and services for discretionary commercial, industrial and urban residential projects within the Urban Service Boundary.*

Policy LU-16b: *Consider requiring joint city/county design review for projects within the Santa Rosa Urban Service Boundary.*

### **GP HOUSING ELEMENT**

Policy HE-3j: *Continue to encourage affordable “infill” projects on underutilized sites within Urban Service Areas by allowing flexibility in development standards pursuant to state density bonus law (Government Code 65915).*

### **GP CIRCULATION AND TRANSIT ELEMENT**

Policy CT-3s: *Refer the following projects to the BPAC to review consistency with the Bikeways Plan and to evaluate potential for creating hazards or barriers to walking or bicycling:*

- (1) Road widening projects*
- (2) Road capacity improvement projects.*
- (3) Resurfacing, restoration, and/or rehabilitation of roads with existing or proposed Class II or Class III bikeways.*
- (4) Resurfacing, restoration, and/or rehabilitation of roads that include the installation of rumble strips, AC berms or similar barriers, and/or roadway dots in the shoulder area.*
- (5) Traffic calming improvements.*
- (6) Discretionary projects adjacent to existing or proposed Class I bikeways and/or roads with existing or proposed Class II or Class III bikeways.*
- (7) Discretionary projects anticipated to be conditioned with roadway improvements along existing or proposed Class I, II or III bikeways.*



## SOUTH SANTA ROSA AREA PLAN

The parcel's land use designation in the South Santa Rosa Area Plan is Urban Residential, allowing densities ranging from five to 15 units per acre. Projects which are consistent with the Housing Element programs and policies are considered consistent with the land use designations in this Area Plan.

### Zoning

The table below summarizes the development standards that apply to the site as outlined in the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance or South Santa Rosa Area Plan, the proposed development conditions, and whether the project is consistent with standards. Inconsistencies are discussed below.

**Table 4. Project Consistency with Development Standards**

Development Standard	Ordinance	South Santa Rosa Area Plan	Proposed Project	Meets Standards	DB Incentive or Waiver Requested
<b>Height</b>	35'	18' at min setback (20'); 35' at 40'	27.5' (2 stories)	No	Yes
<b>Front Setback – Santa Rosa Ave.</b>	15' to property line/45' to CL of road	35' minimum for residential	18' (15' for porch)	No	Yes
<b>Side Setback</b>	5'	N/A	2' for carports	No	Yes
<b>Rear Setback</b>	10'	N/A	30'	Yes	No
<b>RC Setback</b>	100' from TOB	N/A	50'	No	No
<b>Lot Coverage %</b>	60%	N/A	34% (including carports)	Yes	No
<b>Parking Spaces</b>	88	N/A	113	Yes	No
<b>Open Space</b>	10,000 sf (200 sf/unit)	N/A	10,010 sf	Yes	No

Under Section 26-89-060(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, and Government Code Section 65915, the project is eligible for one incentive or concession that would allow for a variation in development standards. Government Code Section 65915 also allows density bonus applicants to request waivers or reductions in development standards, which must be granted if there would be no adverse impact on public health, safety, or the physical environment.

As demonstrated by the table, the project meets or exceeds mosts applicable County development standards with the exception of the height limit prescribed by the South Santa Rosa Area Plan, and the required setbacks from Santa Rosa Avenue and the southern side property line. Staff recommends that three incentives or waivers be approved to allow the following:

1. A building height of 27.5', exceeding the South Santa Rosa Area Plan limit of 18' at the minimum setback (20') or 35' at 40';



2. A setback along Santa Rosa Avenue of 15', exceeding the 35' setback required by the South Santa Rosa Area Plan; and
3. A side setback along southern property line of 2' for the carport structures, exceeding the 5' setback required by the County's zoning ordinance in the R3 District.

## **ANALYSIS**

### ***Consistency with General Plan***

The project is consistent with the overall purpose for the Urban Residential Land Use category. Policies LU-16a and LU-16b will be met through the joint City/County design review process and implemented through conditions of approval. Policy HE-3j supports infill projects with an affordable component in accordance with the State Density Bonus Law. The project was referred to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Committee for consistency with the Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan on 12/25/2019; no response was received. A draft traffic impact analysis dated June 4, 2020 found that bicycle and pedestrian facilities serving the project site are adequate.

### ***Environmental Analysis***

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) will be prepared for this project and available for review by the Committee at a future hearing.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comment has been received to date. One member of the public emailed on 1/4/2020 to inquire whether the project included an affordability component.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Staff Recommendation***

Staff recommends that the Design Review Committee consider the project's preliminary design plans and provide feedback to the applicant regarding the site plan, building architecture, building materials and colors, lighting and landscaping.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Applicant Proposal Statement
2. Site Plan, Architectural Drawings, and Materials and Color Board
3. Preliminary Landscaping and Irrigation Plans
4. Lighting Plans and Photometric Study
5. Civil Drawings
6. Initial Stormwater Low Impact Development Submittal
7. Code References

